PICKET LINE

LOS ANGELES LABOR NEWS

STUDENT-WORKER ACTION COLLECTIVE

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GM Strikers Battle For Local, National Gains

Van Nuys GM Strike Issues

2700 workers are on strike against General Motors in Van Nuys. Picketing is conducted from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. seven days a week.

Van Nuys workers see two issues as crucial for their strike settlement. Winning back a cost-of-living increase clause in their contract is the first of these. The second issue is the question of the dignity of the worker and an end to speedups and arbitrary discipline, layoff, and firing procedures.

Speedup constitutes the top local issue in the strike, and numerous grievances have been filed around this question. In January, GM was running 40 cars an hour through the line. By strike time on Sept. 14 the line had been speeded up to 45 cars an hour. In the same time period many workers were laid off so that the work force was decreased by 300 men.

Strikers see speedup as an example of the company's lack of respect for the workers. Another example of the company's disregard for workers occurred one month before the strike, when 2 guards were laid off and a chain link fence erected around portions of an employee parking lot. The installation of the fence meant that some employees now had to walk a total of eight minutes from their cars into the plant.

A third example of the same phenomenon concerns irregular shift lengths. The company practice has been not to notify workers of the time they would be leaving the plant each day. Consequently workers could not make dinner or other plans with any degree of certainty.

Strikers at the Van Nuys plant spend 3 hours a week either on picket duty or participating in education classes. The education classes are being conducted by the Union's Education Committee under the direction of Lester Balog. Classes are held 3 times a day in the union hall and are attended by 40-50 workers. The usual format is the showing of a film followed by a discussion among the workers.

WESTERN GILLETTE FOLLIES

by Pat Palmer

Old timers at Western Gillette look back with longing to the good old days when the place was run by the elder Cantly and Tanzola. In those days (they say) new business was welcomed and the Co. attempted to give service to its customers, both big and small. This policy worked, because the Co. expanded from a shoe string during World War II into a gigantic interstate line serving all of Calif., stretching through Arizona, Texas, and Tennessee in the South, and crossing Kansas and Oklahoma with terminals in St. Louis and as far as Chicago in the North.

The old boys were not too happy with the Teamsters Union, but they didn't allow that to interfere with their appreciation of faithful service by loyal employees. For many years after the Union came in, the elders dispensed bonuses and Christmas presents to both management and Union people alike.

After their death (close together) Don Cantlay emerged with the power and employee morale began to fall toward its present low.

Suddenly there was a doctrine that said intrastate freight was a losing proposition. The pick-up of California freight was drastically curtailed and discouraged. Customers who had been canvassed daily by pick-up drivers were dropped from that list and told to call in if they had some freight. When they did call in, their requests for pick up were subject to the doctrine of ratio of weight to bulk. Lead would be picked up with alacrity? feathers, never. No trailers were allowed to move north until they carried a thousand pounds per lineal foot. In other words, a thirty foot trailer had to have thirty thousand pounds on it or it did not move.

Repercussions were not long in arriving. Business dropped. Tracing calls multiplied rapidly when people expecting freignt didn't get it and called suppliers who in turn called Western Gillette. The terminals at Tahoe and Lone Pine closed. The facilities at San Francisco closed and left only Oakland for the Bay area. Sacramento closed and its functions were taken over by Stockton. All the California terminals laid off employees for lack of work. A vice president resigned in despair. Old time salesmen left in droves. The new ones are younger and look as if they were recruited from the ranks of greeters of the skin palaces at San Francisco's north beach–or perhaps from the grind houses at Tijuana.

The weight to bulk ratio was extended to transcontinental freight. Some freight stayed on the dock as long as six weeks before moving East. More tracing calls. Telephones rang endlessly and were put on hold. The teletype bill went up; naturally, the teletype facilities to five of the terminals were jerked out by management. A predictable reaction when you work in Disneyland North. The stage was set for the great Desert Express fiasco.

In August 1968, Western Gillette bought out Desert Express. Business was down. What customers there were, were mad. First, the Co. built a new office building and extended the dock to almost double. There was room to hold a dance in the new building even after Desert Express moved in. There still is. Desert Express is strictly intrastate. The only rights that Desert had that Western

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South Gate

800-1000 striking auto workers attended a UAW membership meeting at Local 216's hall across the street from General Motor's South Gate plant on Sunday, Oct. 11.

UAW's South Gate Executive Committee reported that no settlement had yet been reached on local issues in the strike.

Bob Brenner, a representative from the Student Worker Action Collective, spoke at the meeting and offered SWAC's assistance to the auto workers. The membership voted to invite students to participate in support activities for the strike, in co-ordination with the union.

FOOD DRIVE

Auto workers do not want to go back to work because they are hungry. They want to hold out until they have won a good settlement. SWAC is conducting a food drive for striking auto workers. If you have canned goods to contribute or want to help in solicitation or pick-up of food, call 399-5830 or 390-4645.

Militant auto workers from two rank-and-file organizations, the G.M. Workers Unity Committee and the Local 216 Membership Committee, spoke from the floor on issues they consider to be important in the strike. Extension of the strike to the 27 GM plants which supply parts to Ford and Chrysler, reinstitution of the demand for $1.00 an hour in new money, improvement of working conditions, and support for student participation in the strike are among the major issues concerning these two committees. Both committees have also indicated that

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A Program For Student-Worker Action

After ten years of education in struggle the student movement came to the conclusion last May that it lacks the power to end the war, smash racism and sexism, end poverty, defend the rights of the weak, take control of the institutions which govern people's lives, and bring an end to misery, oppression and police state tactics. Last May large sectors of the student movement began to search for allies off campus.

After twenty years of submission to corporate power and corporate terror, wars and racist institutions, and after beginning to experience the erosion of their wages and living conditons, workers have recently begun to move toward a militant confrontation with capital.

In Los Angeles last May, militant striking Teamsters requested the assistance of militant students and received an eager and effective response.

In the course of this joint action of striking Teamsters and striking students, some Teamsters began to recognize that they had an interest in the success of student struggles. Some students began to perceive that social power lies in the working class and that they must turn in that direction in their search for off-campus allies. The Student Worker Action Collective was born out of this action and this understanding.

The common interests of workers and students manifest themselves in all of the great social problems of this country.

.nts and workers alike provide the cannon fodder for the war in Southeast Asia. The conditions of students' and workers' lives have deteriorated under the impact of increasing war and arms xpenditures and the correlative decline in spending on health, education, welfare, public transportation, housing, and other necessary services.

Minority students and minority workers alike are most affected by the inflation and profit-seeking which beset our society. In the area of education, residential segregation, crowded living conditions, schools of inferior quality, the system of tracking, rising fees for higher education, shrinking financial aids, and slashes in minority programs combine to stack the cards against minority students from grade school through the university. On the job, minority workers are assigned the lowest paid positions with the least opportunity for advancement. For those minority students who graduate from the university, racism combines with inflation to make the Black and Chicano graduate the last hired.

Women students and women workers alike are affected by unemployment, educational and vocational channeling and lack of advancement opportunities, and first-fired, last- hired status much as are members of minority groups. In addition to oppression on the job and discrimination in school, women must bear the burdens of housework and child care, labor for which they are unpaid. Women on the job and off are frequently subjected to psychological oppression and sexual objectification.

Workers and students alike are affected by the increasing use of force by the state in its attempt to suppress growing discontent with the ills and inequities in American society. In labor disputes, police protect scabs who enter struck plants?American society. In labor disputes, police protect scabs who enter struck plants; in Trona last spring, company guards shot two workers on strike against the American Potash and Chemical Company. The killing of Kent State and Jackson State students last May, the gassing and/or beatings of students on hundreds of campuses across the country in the same month, and the reflection of this violence in the UCLA police action on May 5th serve as testimony enough to the measures the capitalist class will take to protect its interests.

Although we have a common interest and our situations result from a common cause, workers and students, White, Black, and Chicano, and men and women have heretofore been divided in their struggles. We of SWAC believe we have the means to turn this situation around.

We must unite students and working people around a common demand: that the massive resources now being wasted by the military budget be put to productive social use.

In our view, ending the war and redirecting our political economy from arms production to production for human needs will not easily be achieved. So long as the class interests of the capitalists are allowed to dictate the activities and social priorities of our country, the major social changes which the United States requires cannot be attained. The ruling class and their Democratic-Republican puppets will neither undertake nor accept these changes without organizing a lengthy and savage resistance.

We members of SWAC are socialists. We believe that only the working class has the strength to carry out the revolution which America needs today.

Many students have noted the apparent passivity of the American working class and the collaboration of their unions with the corporations. But during the past five years, real wages have begun to fall, unemployment has increased, and inflation has gotten out of hand. In the foreseeable future the economic and social crisis is almost certain to get worse and as it does, the level of working class struggle is certain to rise. Labor has been politically impotent since the days of Sam Gompers. Labor has gone deeper and deeper into the morass of Democratic Party politics. Simultaneously, the Democratic Party, which has controlled Congress for most of the past forty years, has tied tighter and tighter the legislative hobbles on labor's power. Simultaneously, these "friends of labor" have plunged us ever deeper and deeper into a suicidal policy of extended imperialist wars and police state power.

Workers, already organized as a class for economic objectives in their trade unions, must and will organize themselves as a class in a labor party.

With the support of labor withdrawn from the Democrats and Republicans and with the power of labor politically organized into a party of labor, American capitalism will receive a stunning blow from which its recovery is most improbable.

In the coming period, the Student Worker Action Collective has a specific function to fulfill in helping to create an alliance of students and workers.

The initial tasks of SWAC are (1) to bring working class politics to the campus and (2) to bring the relevant political consciousness of the student movement to workers' struggles.

SWAC is the workers' bridgehead on campus. To bring working class politics to the campus, and to help workers discover the political reasons for their economic problems, we must employ a combination of educational activities and concrete political actions, stressing the unity of interests of students and workers.

An immediate service which SWAC can render is to provide information and political analysis about the specific, on-going struggles of students and wor ers in the Los Angeles area. This newspaper is an attempt to provide that service. PICKET LINE will be published every two weeks and will contain articles on strikes, rank-and-file caucuses, campus struggles, and other activities of workers and students.

PICKET LINE is a first step toward a worker-student alliance--an alliance which we members of SWAC hope and believe will be instrumental in bringing about a labor party and ultimately revolutionary change in this country.

Such a program can be successful only if, in the course of several years, workers have succeeded in organizing rank-and-file labor party caucuses in major unions around the country. SWAC can be helpful to this development only if it unerringly holds to the following principles:

1. Absolute opposition to imperialist wars and their campus manifestations.
2. An end to racism.
3. An end to the suppression of civil liberties.
4. The liberation of women.
5. Reconversion of the economy under workers' control for production toward human needs, not war, waste, and profits.
6. Guaranteed jobs for all.
7. Rank-and-file control of the labor movement.
8. Formation of an independent party of labor.

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QUOTATIONS FROM
THE FOUNDING FATHERS

"Merchants have no country. The mere spot they stand on does not constitute so strong an attachment as that from which they draw their gains.

Thomas Jefferson

Modern Version:

"What's good for General Motors is good for the country."

Charles Wilson--
Former president of GM

South Gate

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they are prepared to campaign for the continuation of the strike if the first settlement reached in Detroit is unsatisfactory.

The South Gate GM plant employs 3200 auto workers. A total of 375,000 UAW union members are off the job in the United States and Canada. All automobile production has stopped in the GM empire, normally the producer of 55% of all cars manufactured in the United States. This is the first national strike against General Motors since 1946.

The UAW is now in the sixth week of the strike. The UAW entered the strike with $120,000,000, the largest strike fund in its history, and with on-line credit arranged for several million dollars more. The fund pays weekly strike benefits of $30 for a single worker, $35 for a couple, and $40 for a family with children. It also covers the payment of insurance premiums normally picked up by GM. Strike fund benefits will run out in two weeks, and many South Gate workers have applied for welfare.

A good portion of the national issues in the strike consist of winning back gains included in past contracts but relinquished during the 1967 negotiations. In the 1967 contract negotiated between the UAW and GM, a ceiling was placed on cost-of-living benefits. As a result of this ceiling, UAW workers are now about 30 cents an hour in real wages behind their 1967 level. A major strike demand is restoration of a full cost-of-living clause in the contract. This was included in UAW contracts from the late 1940's to 1967.

Another key issue is what has been termed by the UAW leadership "a substantial wage increase." Toward the beginning of the strike UAW head Leonard Woodcock was talking in terms of an immediate $1.25 per hour pay boost. More recently Woodcock has indicated a willingness to settle for $ .60 to $ .80, a range well below the pattern of recent Teamster and construction settlements. Since real wages of auto workers have actually declined by $ .30 since the last contract, only $ .30 of a $ .60 settlement would constitute new money for the workers.

Other key demands of the UAW leadership include:

1. 30 and out at $500. This means that any worker with 30 years service can retire with a minimum monthly pension of $500 per month.
2. A dental plan to be added to the current health coverage.
3. An increase in GM's contribution to the Supplementary Unemployment Benefits Fund. This provides workers who are laid off or who work less than 40 hours in a week up to 85% of their regular 40 hours pay. The fund is now underfinanced and can be easily bankrupted in an economic downturn.

GM hopes in this strike settlement to both hold the line against the above demands and to make inroads into benefits that have been won in past contracts. GM insists that future increases in health insurance costs be borne by the workers. More importantly, GM insists that the currently inadequate grievance and representation procedures be weakened even further.

To most GM workers, grievance and representation procedures are a life and death matter. Working conditions are already intolerable. Few auto workers make it to retirement age. The yearly turnover rate in the industry is about 25% of the work force. Those who stay find that the assembly line, working conditions, and supervision practices severely attack a person's health, nerves and personal dignity. GM wants to use speedup and tighter work discipline as a way to extract from workers' backs any gains they may win in wages and benefits. If GM succeeds, even if the workers win "30 and out", few will survive in the industry long enough to use it.

Over the past 25 years the auto industry has set the pace for wage gains in other sections of industry. This year there have been several major strikes and important gains won in advance of the auto contract. Both GM and the Nixon administration would like to hold the line with the auto strike. If they succeed they will have an easier time refusing wage gains to other workers. If the auto workers are able to make significant gains, this will solidify the pattern already set.

Gillette

Continued from Page 1

Gillette did not have, were into Bakersfield and over into the desert including Tehachapi, Mojave, Lancaster, Palmdale and Edwards Air Force Base, plus the Victorville-Barstow runs. The Desert Express terminals were closed and their functions merged into the paralleling Western Gillette terminals. Since Western had no permanent purchase rights from the PUC, Desert accounting and billing had to be maintained. But Desert employees were dovetailed into a Master seniority list as Western employees. People were bumped and some laid off. Others took early retirement. Others were placed in untenable positions and just plain hassled into resigning.

The paper work was confusing. Since some shipments could move on either Western or Desert billing, it became necessary to look into two files to trace one shipment. This doubled the tracing load without adding any people to take care of it. Drivers had to carry two bills of lading. The filing clerks had to maintain another set of files. If you answered the phone, saying 'Western Gillette,' the caller might hang up in confusion as he was expecting Desert Express.

In Case 8-70-5375 Joint Western Action Council Change of Operations Committee August 12, 1970 Western Gillette got permission to separate the two companies again. Now the plan is to make all the Western terminals in California into Desert terminals, except for one in Oakland and one in Los Angeles. At this writing the location of the Desert terminal in LA has not been officially announced. The reason given for the separation is that the PUC would not recognize the two sets of rights running parallel as long as only one set was being used, and PUC would not give Western Gillette permanent possession of Desert Express. 'So,', the Company says, 'all the authority that was duplicated would be null and void and . . . not resaleable . . . so the determination made to go into a separate intrastate operation. . .'

Also the plan calls for the Company to post a certain number of jobs for bid at the new Desert terminal in L.A. The jobs not bid by Western employees will be filled from the bottom of the seniority list. The people who go on a Master seniority list at Western for one year will be considered as Desert seniority. In case of layoff at Desert after a year, the employee would have prior right to a job at Western Gillette in case of an opening on a one-call basis, BUT AFTER A YEAR AT DESERT HE WOULD HAVE LOST ALL HIS WESTERN SENIORITY. So, if Desert goes down the tube in a year and a day, forget it, Charley.

Western Gillette lies in the heart of beautiful downtown Vernon, encompassed by barbed wire punctuated with one way gates. Unyielding concrete and asphalt are the only surfaces in view for miles. Add killer dogs and rent-a-cops at times like the recent strike and the whole scene looms out of the smog as a perfect place to shoot Hogans Heroes. No greenery relieves the eye. Smart birds fly high or take a detour. Approaching by car from the east, one inhales the smoky blood taste of Farmer John's slaughter house, a unique sensory experience particularly when laced with natural gas when the City's tanks slop over. Mix well with the aroma of the nearby Chemical plant and the railroad and the foundry and have a good day!

Walk up the ramp of the main dock--but warily--as fork lifts mingle with foot traffic and you get the impression that the 'Bug' drivers must be getting premium pay for overkill in the speed department. Thread your way through the moving line of freight carrying cable carts to the dock time-clock which--through accident or design--is as far as possible from the parking lot.

Stop and look at the bulletin board just east of the dock dispatchers' shack. It's covered for the most part with management's demands and requests, some curt and imperative, some weak and querulous. Most are appended by anonymous scatological rejoinders penned by the rank and file. Nothing much there. We'll take a closer look later.

Just next to the bulletin board is an area reserved for "on hand" freight. It is piled high in confused rows with elaborate unconcern for the bursting point of the cartons or the necessity of reading any labels. Dusty, neglected by all, this is the freight that has been rejected by consignees for one reason or another, or perhaps it had a wrong address or the party had moved or was not at home. Some consignees are just not ready for the freight yet and think they are going to use Western Gillette for a warehouse until they are ready. Poor misguided optimists, they think of their freight as money in the bank being held like gold nuggets until they call for its delivery. But Western Gillette thinks of the freight like a kidnapper thinks of his victim. The freight is really being held for ransom! A lucrative storage charge will be assessed against its deliverance.

Next to the "on hand" section is a section devoted to the "over without billing" freight. The "wonder" freight. Wonder where it came from and wonder where it is supposed to go. Some of it is labelled and some is not. It will have to be matched up with paper work to be turned into revenue and people will have to be paid union wages to do the job. Two management men, one the office manager and the other the OS&D (Over, Short and Damaged) supervisor, wander through it nervously. Top management has made this section the target of the month lately and Batman and Robin, as they are known to the rank and file, are apprehsnive. No wonder. Jobs have been lost in management on just such petty projects at Western Gillette with bewildering rapidity. During the last three years we saw Mandrake and Lothar lose out, likewise Gene Autry and Smiley Burnette, the Lone Ranger and Tonto, even Punjab and the Asp. The odds on Batman and Robin aren't good either. Soon we'll have some other odd couple so it all works out.

We close with the latest rumor. It's that the Desert jobs will be posted Monday, Oct. 19, 1970 and that the old Sea Land dock in South Gate is to be Desert's new home. Tune in again for the latest from the wild and wonderfully weird world of Western Gillette.

WELFARE WORKER FIRING FOUGHT

The right of County employe to be concerned with social issu has been challenged by the firing a Long Beach welfare worker arrested while acting as a union observer at a sit-in of welfare mothers at a Department of Public Social Services office on Sept. 10.

Pat Brooks, a probationary Eligibility Worker in the DPSS Long Beach adult aids district, was arrested with 22 welfare mothers at 10 P.M. on Sept. 10 when the group failed to obey a police order to vacate the welfare office. The mothers were sitting in to demand clothing orders for their school children.

Because of her actions during the sit-in, Pat Brooks was at first suspended for 30 days without pay. This sanction was later changed to an immediate discharge, and Pat was given 15 minutes to leave County premises. A letter verifying her dismissal for conduct "unbecoming of a county employee" was received on Sept. 18.

Social Workers Union Local 535 called an emergency union meeting in response to Pat's dismissal. The union filed a grievance with DPSS administrator Ellis P. Murphy. A letter of support circulated in the Long Beach office gained the signatures of many of Pat's fellow employees.

The Welfare Rights Organization, the group which sponsored the sit-in, demonstrated support in a candlelight march on District Director Fullbright's home. WRO has supported Pat personally by providing her with part-time employment as a community aide.

The Los Angeles Social Welfare Workers Movement, the local chapter of a national organization of health, education and welfare workers, has called upon Local 535 to issue a special bulletin to all DPSS workers explaining the circumstances of Pat's dismissal and demanding her reinstatement. SWWM has also called upon the union to organize a demonstration in Pat's behalf and to provide her with the free services of a union lawyer in the court proceedings resulting from her arrest.

SWWM views Pat's dismissal as an attempt by DPSS to tighten its control over the political activity of its employees. In the Oct. 13th issue of the SWWM newsletter, the group states, 'The administration was clearly stating that her ability as a worker was irrelevant, and that she was being fired because of her beliefs and conduct, which was 'unbecoming a County employee.' They failed to mention that she participated in the demonstration on her own time, in the capacity of a duly appointed union observer, after working hours . . . The fight will continue to thwart this expression of arbitrary power, this act of political and spiritual oppression.'

Local 208:

Teamsters Fight Trusteeship

The International leadership of the Teamsters recently took Local 208 into trusteeship. A 208 caucus met October l6 to deal with the situation. Following are notes of that meeting by a rank-and-file member of that local:

The employers (California Trucking Association–CTA) have enjoyed an unholy alliance with the International for some time. The employers' idea of a good employee is one who does his work, punches in and out on time and keeps his mouth shut. The International's idea of a good union man is one who pays his dues and does not make any waves. Both the International and the CTA have hated the leadership of 208 for a long time because the BA's insisted on maintaining Union standards. The CTA does not thin vof people as people but merely as robots to be fitted into slots and moved and manipulated without any regard to human feelings or dignity.

At present--or at least before the big strike--208 had a sense of fraternity. The men participated in a give and take at the Union meetings and many stayed afterwards to pursue matters with the BA's on a friendly basis.

But the International does not want an atmosphere of fraternity. The International leadership wants the members to leave the driving to the Union and leave the hall after the meeting without any embarassing questions. CTA is far along in their maniacal determination to destroy good leadership in 208. The trusteeship is the result of a deal between the International and the CTA. The many lawsuits by truckers against 208 will be quietly dropped once the Trusteeship is consummated. These are the steps:

1. About 700 men losing jobs as the result of panel hearings. That kills off the real militants.

2. Getting rid of the good BA's--thus getting rid of the militants' friends.

3. The mopping-up process, with the International and JWAC working together with the CTA on various switches and manipulations to get other people who did not act like GOOD boys according to the International-CTA definition of GOOD.

HEARING OCTOBER 27

Another precedent was set at the October 12 hearing The judge retained jurisdiction. The International wanted the next hearing to be held in Washington, D.C. but Levy hung tough and the hearing was scheduled to be held in the Union Hall in Los Angeles so it will be possible to have rank-and-file witnesses for testimony without these witnesses having to take time off to travel to DC. This is also unheard of, as heretofore a Trusteeship meant an absolute dictatorship from the word go. Now 208 has a chance to fight on its own turf among friends. Since this ruling the new Trustees have been busy trying to co-opt militants. One of the big leaders in last Spring's wildcat has been offered a BA job. The CTA has offered other jobs in management. Pursuing a schedule of BUY-SELL-SCARE, the International and CTA are trying to prevent any mass rank-and-file involvement in the October 27 hearing. Many others have been approached and will be approached in the near future. If they are able to BUY a man he will be used and when his usefulness is over, he will be discredited and exposed to the ran and-file as a JUDAS. If they can SCARE him, that's even easier and cheaper.

FIGHTING BACK

A Teamster told of being in Chicago and Cleveland. He pointed out that a lot of what is going on in L.A. is our own rank-and-file fault. No one in Chicago or Cleveland got fired or is going to be fired because the rank-and-file is together. This weakness in our rank-and-file must be corrected through education if possible but it will be corrected one way or another. To which there was a unanimous "Amen."

Plans were made for the October 27 hearing. Petitions against the trusteeship are to be circulated and as many names as possible turned in. Also cards for use of those rank and file people who wish to testify for the old leadership are to be passed out and monitored by the caucus stewards. Petitions from members of other Teamster locals will be welcomed.

Watch for notices of future meetings of this caucus.

KAISER PLAN HIT

Workers at the Max Factor plant in Gardena are demanding improvements in the medical care they are receiving. Many of the members of ILWU Local 26 employed there are dissatisfied with the service provided by the Kaiser-Permanente Group Health Insurance.

The workers' complaints are numerous and–to anyone who has ever had experience with Kaiser-Permanente–sadly familiar. It is almost impossible to gt an appointment when it is needed. Workers have to wait, sometimes for months, before even urgent problems are dealt with. Often workers are refused hospitalization due to lack of space.

Recently some workers have gotten together to fight this situation. At present they are planning to pass around a petition demanding several immediate changes in the administration of the program.

UCLA:

Employees Organize

Collective bargaining rights for UCLA's 13,000 employees are being sought by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and the American Federation of Teachers.

AFSCME has begun an organizing campaign to win the right to represent office workers on all 9 campuses of the University of California. An August Berkeley conference attended by representatives of most of these campuses provided impetus to the organizing drive. At UCLA, AFSCME Local 2070 has achieved official status in the Medical Center which employs 5000 workers. Local 2070's initial activities included the filing of 14 employee grievances of which 12 have been decided in favor of the employee.

The Employees Organizing Committee, AFSCME Local 2070 and AFT Local 1990 have just opened a joint office at 1072 Gayley Avenue, Westwood Village. The phone number is 473-2350.

The threat of layoffs, low wages, and lack of child care facilities for women workers are among the issues confronted by the Employees' Organizing Committee. The cutback in government funds for education has resulted in an indirect tax upon UCLA employees in the form of low wages. Layoffs are another result of the cutback in funds, and UCLA employees are not even entitled to unemployment insurance. Often as much as one-third of the paycheck of women workers, many of whom are the heads of households, must be spent on child care.

The American Federation of Teachers is engaged in a drive to sign up a greater number of UCLA's faculty. AFT's College Council recently merged with the Association of California State College Professors, a professional association. The new group, called the United Professors of California, covers both the University and the State College systems.

White collar and professional labor organizations at UCLA are considering the formation of a UCLA Employees' Council which would include blue collar labor as well. As a first step in this direction, the Employees' Organizing Committee, AFSCME Local 2070, and AFT Local 1990 have opened a joint office in Westwood Village.

Poor working conditions, little opportunity for advancement, and discriminatory practices directed at Black and Chicano workers are additional issues raised by hospital employees. The child care problem is compounded for women who work on night shifts.

PICKET LINE

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Miners Build Rank And File Power

As we go to press, voting in the United Mine Workers elections is being completed and the results tallied. The vote is expected to be close. UMW President W.A. "Tony" Boyle and his slate face a challenge by one of the strongest and most militant rank and file opposition organizations in American labor--the Miners for Democracy.

The Miners for Democracy (MFD) was brought together around the 1969 election campaign of Joseph Yablonski. It was formally organized by a handful of Yablonski's close supporters after Yablonski and his family were murdered in late 1969. (International Executive Board member and close Boyle henchman, Albert Pass, has been indicted, among others, for the murders.)

The leadership of the MFD is a mixed bag. It ranges from the Washington lawyer, Joseph Rauh, to Arnold Miller, president of the militant Black Lung Association, and Karl Kafton, District 6 opposition leader and one of the leading organizers and strategists of the 115 day contract rejection wildcat of 1966.

Its ranks now number in the tens of thousands. Over one third of the UMW's 1200 locals have voted to endorse the MFD slate of Arnold Miller (President), Mike Trbovich (VP), and Harry Patrick (Secretary-Treasurer). In the three years of its existence, the MFD has pursued a multi-front strategy of opposition to the Boyle machine--including law suits, campaigns in local elections, and lending leadership and organizational support to wildcats and other job actions.

COAL PROFITS UP

The coal mining industry was at one time made up of many small companies and competitive. But in the past decade it has become increasingly dominated by some of the largest monopolist corporations in America. Economies of scale, increased investment in high-speed equipment, and decreasing competition have resulted in an 87% increase in profits over the last three years. It is the continuing policy of accommodation with these big coal corporations by the Tony Boyle leadership that has provoked open rebellion within the UMW rank and file.

Wildcats greeted the signing of the 1964 and 1966 national coal agreements, and work stoppages over mine safety and black lung during 1968, 1969, and 1970 were frequent and cut deeply into production and output.

The Pay Board approved a substantial wage rise negotiated in the 1971 contract, but it now is being charged that Boyle traded a crippling no-strike clause to get it. More recently the Pay Board was flatly told last October by Arnold Miller of the MFD to expect an industry wide wildcat if the second stage of this pay hike was disallowed. (It was allowed.)

BOYLE IGNORES MINE SAFETY

The ranks are angry with Tony Boyle for having done nothing, or sold them out on every issue of importance to them. Under present conditions, mining coal is the world's most dangerous occupation. One miner is killed every other work day. Even above the ground, in strip mining, the equipment is so dangerous and the speedup so fierce, that 27 strip miners have died this year alone.

Black lung faces every miner. In 1969 it took a wildcat of several weeks' duration to force minimal black lung legislation through the West Virginia Legislature Pensions are a paltry $150 a month.

Meanwhile, in his ten years in office, Boyle has cooperated with every productivity drive instituted by the operators. Boyle and company have allowed the UMW

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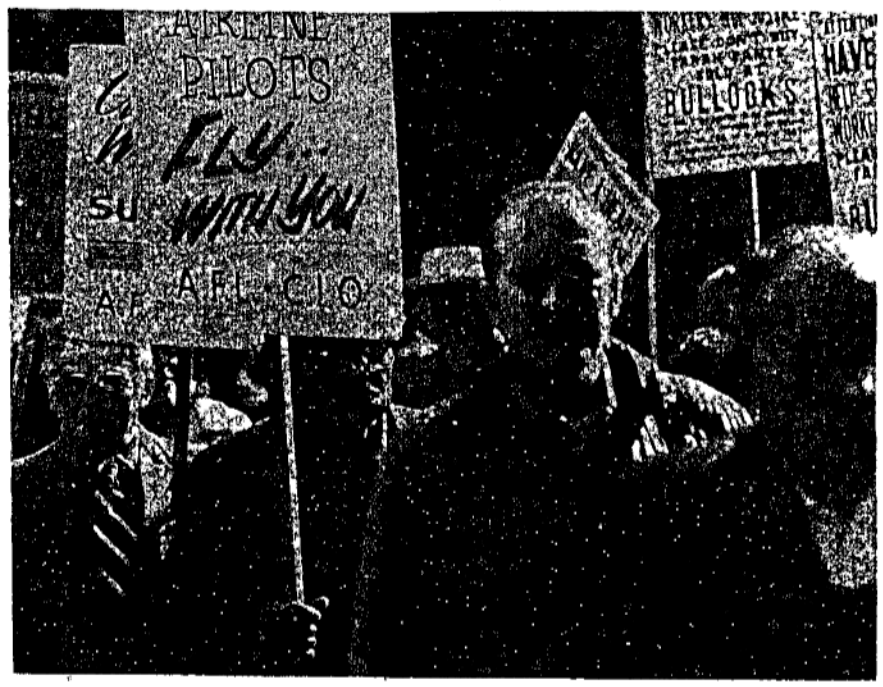

1500 Workers Picket May Co. & Bullock's as Part of Nationwide Demonstration

BOYCOTT FARAH PANTS!

On Monday, December 11, Christmas shoppers in downtown L.A. were greeted by picket lines of more than 1,500 workers outside May Co. and Bullock's stores asking them NOT TO BUY FARAH PANTS. There were simultaneous picket lines up in all major cities of California and the U.S. The demonstrations, called by the AFL-CIO County Labor Council, were part of a growing nation-wide movement to Boycott Farah Pants. On Monday's picket line were members of many unions including the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, IAM, SEIU, United Farmworkers, as well as groups such as the Labor Committee of the La Raza Unida Party who are supporting and building the boycott.

The drive to boycott Farah pants is being organized to assure a victory for the 2,000 workers on strike for over 7 months against Farah Manufacturing Co. in Texas and New Mexico. The strike began last May over the company's firing of a union activist who was trying to help the Farah workers organize into the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. The strikers, largely Chicano and women workers, have extended their demands to include union recognition, higher wages, good hospitalization (including maternity leave), decent pensions, etc.

In real garment industry tradition, Farah runs a sweatshop. Farah's 9,500 employees now earn an average of $1.70 per hour, only 10¢ above the legal minimum wage of $1.60. An El Paso Chamber of Commerce report showed that workers at Farah and

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A LOS ANGELES FARAH BOYCOTT COMMITTEE has been formed to build the boycott here in LA. The Committee meets every Friday night at 8 PM at 5226 Whittier Blvd. For information, call Lydia: 266-0970 or 257-9284. If you want to help organize the boycott, please come--there's plenty of work.

PUBLIC HOUSING RENT STRIKE

Twenty-eight Black and Chicano families are in the midst of a rent strike against the Los Angeles Housing Authority. All of these families are headed by women.

The William Mead housing project on the outskirts of downtown L.A. is a low, cramped thirty-year old project entirely surrounded by industries. The apartments are dingy and narrow, without sufficient electricity or space. Rents can be as high as $135 per month since the Housing Authority assessment is one-fourth of the families' monthly income.

Like the Welfare Office, the Housing Authority thinks it is their right to come and go in any apartment as they please, at any time that they please. If they don't approve of a woman's housekeeping, they can evict her for being too sloppy.

All of these difficulties finally erupted when the management decided to remodel the apartments. At that point

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RANKS HIT UAW GMAD STRATEGY

The futility of the UAW "Apache strike" strategy is becoming increasingly obvious. As Picket Line reported in the special supplement to our November issue, the UAW's lone victory claim in the current strike series - at St. Louis GMAD - proved totally unfounded.

Following the St. Louis strike, UAW claimed to have won favorable settlements of hundreds of outstanding "78" work overload grievances. But when the men returned to work, they found that GM had merely transferred the overloads to different places in the factory. New grievances began to pile up immediately, and anger in the plant mounted.

Finally, UAW had to abandon all pretense of a settlement at St. Louis and has authorized a new strike there (date not yet set).

In the December issue of its newspaper, the United National Caucus (UNC), a rank and file opposition group within the UAW, has summed up the feelings of many auto rank and filers about the International's strategy as follows:

"The mini-strike is something the International cooked up with GM as an escape valve for the rapidly building anger of the membership. On the one hand, it certainly doesn't solve the problem with GM. On the other, it keeps the strike fund of the International intact."

In its call for a new strategy, UNC argued that: "In the last analysis, whether strikes are won or lost depends on several issues. Does the union leader-

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PICKET LINE
L.A. Rank & File
Labor News
STUDENT-WORKER ACTION COMMITTEE

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How To Fight Runaway Firms . . . And How Not To

The strike and boycott now being waged against Farah Pants is of greatest importance to the labor movement. The anti-Farah demonstrations held December 11 at May Co. and Bullock's kick off a concerted campaign to build the boycott in the LA area. (See article page one of this issue) DON'T BUY FARAH PANTS!

A victory against Farah could mark a turning point for the labor movement: first, in the fight to organize unorganized workers throughout the South and West; second, in the struggle by Chicano, and especially women workers, to end their oppression as one of the most exploited groups in the labor force; third, in the growing battle to combat runaway firms and runaway industries which move into new areas seeking cheap and un-unionized labor.

Today much of the old textile industry of the Northeast U.S. is in ruins and the labor movement there is in trouble. Textile firms have left this well-organized and "high wage" area to enter the as yet un-organized low-wage areas of the South and West. The Farah strike and boycott, which confronts a multi-million dollar clothing company in one of the less well-organized regions of the country, serves notice on the corporations that they can no longer use one section of the working class against another. All are getting organized and united to protect each other's standard of living.

SEARCH FOR CHEAP LABOR

As everyone knows, the huge national and multi-national corporation is today a fact of life, extending its tentacles anywhere necessary to squeeze out profits from the cheapest labor that can be found. A victory at Farah would provide a crucial example of how the runaway firms and runaway industries should be fought: that is, by building the broadest and strongest solidarity among workers everywhere.

On the other hand, we feel that the recent nation-wide demonstrations, led by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, in support of quotas on foreign imports in general, and the Burke-Hartke protectionist congressional bill in particular, represent a very narrow and unfruitful way to attack the problem of the runaway corporations.

Rather than engaging in the struggle to extend the strength and solidarity of the labor movement to prevent super-exploitation wherever it is found, as in the case of the Farah strike boycott, the labor supporters of import quotas suggest that textile and other workers should align with U.S. owners against foreign owners and workers. We feel this is not only wrong, but self-defeating.

PROTECTIVE TARIFFS NOT THE WAY

To demand import quotas today runs directly against the elementary principle of labor solidarity, for it is to demand the unemployment of foreign workers in those import industries. This is to set U.S. workers and their interests against foreign workers.

But supporting import quotas also sets U.S. workers against each other. For by keeping out lower-priced foreign goods, we drive up the cost of living and in addition simply shift the unemployment from one U.S. industry to another. For example, as working people pay more for essentials like shoes and clothing because of textile quotas and for durable household goods like washing machines because of steel import quotas, they will have less to spend on other goods, like furniture or housing. So the demand for these other items will go down threatening unemployment in the furniture and construction industries.

Protective tariffs produce unemployment in another way. Import restrictions on foreign goods are very likely to spur retaliatory measures in the importing country, which would mean limits on U.S. exports there. For example, as we stop buying clothing from the Japanese, they will cut down on imports from the U.S. Workers in this country dependent on exports to Japan will be thrown out of work. So, while we may save jobs in one industry by protecting it from imports, some other industry here which does exporting is likely to develop unemployment to make up for it. Those workers now unemployed will buy less clothing, lowering demand and creating unemployment in the very industry the tariff was supposed to protect.

REAL INTERNATIONAL UNIONISM

We think a far more fruitful approach to the fight against the big corporations was suggested last week in San Francisco, where union leaders from 23 nations met and agreed on broad plans to bargain together for all workers employed by global corporations regardless of which country the multinational giants locate their plants in. Within the next few months the nine worldwide trade union councils will meet separately to formulate plans for dealing with workers at six U.S. based firms (Ford, Chrysler, GM, Singer, General Electric, and SKF) and three others (Fiat-Citroen, based in France; Toyota-Nissan, based in Japan; and Brown Boveri, based in Switzerland).

The unions' plans include establishment of common expiration dates for contracts at all plants of a multinational firm and coordination of bargaining goals. If a union in one country cannot strike in support of workers in another country, it would be asked to contribute to help the strikers and join in a boycott of the product being struck.

As Dan Benedict, assistant secretary of the International Metal Workers Federation said, the long-range goal is to join forces so the company cannot "play one nation's workers against the other as they do now." We think this approach of building international solidarity should not be confined to multi-national corporations, but should be extended to wherever workers are being forced to compete against one another.

This is the lesson of the struggle against Farah. The alternative of siding with the bosses against foreign workers, while apparently an easy way out, is bound to backfire.

FARAH BOYCOTT

Continued from page 1

other non-union clothing plants are the second lowest paid group of workers in the city. Farah workers can be fired at a moments' notice at the whim of a supervisor. Some have been fired just as they are ready to begin drawing retirement benefits. On the job workers are subject to production quotas that are always being raised to keep them just out of reach.

One woman striker said that for two years her supervisor kept promising her a raise if her production went up. "It went up but I never saw any raise," she said, "I was still at $1.70 when I left."

But the Boycott is hurting Farah. Latest reports show the company lost 7.7 million dollars in the first nine months of the year and $5.1 million during the last quarter (compared to a $1.7 million profit in the same three month period in 1971).

PICKET LINE urges all its readers and their friends to support the Farah strike by not buying Farah pants.

Teamster Local 208 Officer Calls For Labor Party

Speaking in San Francisco at the November 18 anti-war rally, John T. Williams, business agent for Teamsters Local 208, called on labor to break with both of the major political parties. Later, in an interview with the Bulletin newspaper, Williams said, "There is a revolution taking place at this moment among rank and file workers. It will take a labor party to focus this revolution."

It is urgent for workers to break with simple trade unionism and to develop independent political policy and actions, Williams said. "The labor movement has not taken the rank and file beyond a certain line, namely collective bargaining negotiations. But workers are not getting anywhere on this line. We can't solve our problems within these restrictions."

"WELFARE IS NO BED OF ROSES"

REPORT FROM A MEMBER OF S.E.I.U. 535

On The Line: Welfare Office, West LA

Being on welfare is no bed of roses. I've been involved with it for 4 1/2 years, first as a welfare worker & then as a recipient for several months. Last year I was fired for having the audacity to appear with clients before the Board of Supervisors to ask for emergency aid for recipients.

My wife, infant son, two stepchildren and myself had to live on $282 plus $50 worth of food stamps and medical aid. The $66.40 per person didn't go very far.

The obstacles that a poor person must hurdle to get welfare are hard to believe. Clients and workers have to fill out reams of paper both for aid applications and checking up for changes.

OLD & DISABLED: ONLY $200

To get food stamps, for instance, a person can have no more than $185 net income or $240 for a couple. If a person is absolutely penniless, he can get $36 a month in food stamps. The maximum that a person on Aid to the Disabled can receive is $232, and this is only if he eats all of his meals out and spends $15 a month for transportation to the doctor. The basic disabled grant is $193.

Most workers have the illusion that social security will meet their needs when they reach 65, but the most that a person can get on social security is a little over $200. Many old people get only half this amount. So many old people have to supplement their income with welfare. The maximum that an old person with no income can get is $223 plus up to $50 for a housekeeper or more if he or she qualifies for a personal attendant. The hitch with the housekeeper is that you must hire one and be able to pay her two or three months before welfare pays you back.

If you're among the only 1 in 5 who gets approved for general relief, you'll receive your first check for a maximum $115 two or three months after date of application. You have to work this off at the rate of $1.60 an hour or pay it back. Your rent can't be over $60 a month.

When you apply for general relief, you have to sign a statement which includes the provision that you'll "accept any job which is offered me." You have to prove that you've applied for 10 jobs per week.

Most general relief people have to work two days a week on such county jobs as raking leaves or sorting laundry at the hospitals.

The 5,000 to 10,000 LA general relief people constitute a work force that labors well below union wages, lets the county hire fewer fulltime employees, and perpetuates sweatshops.

LOCAL 300 BOSS TAKES PAID 10 WEEK 'VACATION'

From Members of Local 300:

To the rank and filers of the Laborers Union Local 300 it is well known that their corrupt officials use every trick in the book to make money off the membership.

Anyone still in doubt about that is advised to merely take a look at the police record of Field Manager M. Renteria. Recently, Renteria doesn't even feel it necessary to show up for "work" anymore. For over ten weeks he has not done any union business while still receiving full pay and all the extra benefits he manages to secure for himself and his cronies.

Whether he is sick or on vacation or simply has something more important to do, the members see in this behavior only one more evidence of what Local 300 really means to Renteria -- a means to fill his pockets. It is about time to have a change in administration.

TEAMSTER NOTES

Trucking Profits

The national Master Freight Agreement in the trucking industry expires July 1. In the coming months we can expect a lot of "crying poor" by the employers. Already trade journals like Pacific Traffic are saying no wage increases are possible without rate (i.e. price) increases. The employers are thus setting the stage for attacks on demands for improved working conditions and living standards as "greedy" and "inflationary."

1971 operating costs for the trucking companies were up 16.7% because of an increased amount of business. At the same time, the income from the operations leaped up by 110%. For the year ending September 30, 1972, trucking company profits led all other types of industry with a return of 20.9% on net worth.

TURF Newsletter

The Teamsters United Rank and File (TURF) distributed last month a newsletter on the upcoming contract negotiation. In an "Open Letter to All Teamsters," TURF national president Grover E. "Curly" Best said; "In the coming months we in TURF want to wage a fight for a decent 1973 contract for the rank and file around this program or a similar one. Whether you agree or disagree with the program we propose here, your participation will be our salvation. No contract will be good if the rank and file just sit tight." The newsletter included articles on major contract areas and a questionnaire for rank and file response to and comment on a series of contract proposals.

What's Bugging Frank?

The Teamsters Union has just announced that it is transferring its $100,000 a year legal business from the law firm which pursued the Watergate Democratic Headquarters bugging case for the Democratic Party.

The LA Times reported that "Teamsters President Frank W. Fitzsimmons, one of Mr. Nixon's staunchest political allies, unsuccessfully pressured the law firm of Edward Bennett William to back away from its aggressive pursuit of the Watergate case, a major political embarrassment to Mr. Nixon." In retaliation Fitzsimmons dropped the Teamsters' business with the firm.

And where is Fitzsimmons taking the Teamsters' legal business to now?

None other than the firm now being joined by Charles W. Colson, one of Nixon's very top political aides. Colson has been strongly rumored to be the White House's key contact man with the group which carried out the Watergate bugging! ! !

Colson, in an interview with the Washington Post, published December 5, had said his recommendation for the release of Jimmy Hoffa from prison was not connected with the Teamsters' endorsement of Mr. Nixon for reelection.

RENT STRIKE

Continued from page 1

the women organized a rent strike and put forth the following statement:

"We as tenants are sick and tired of the inequities and inhuman conditions we have had to endure. While the remodeling of the kitchens was in progress, the tenants have had to live in conditions as bad as in the days of the tenant farm laborers."

"We have had our walls torn out, our kitchens torn up so that you could look from the kitchen into the restroom. Filth has been on our floors that was torn from the decayed and roach infested walls."

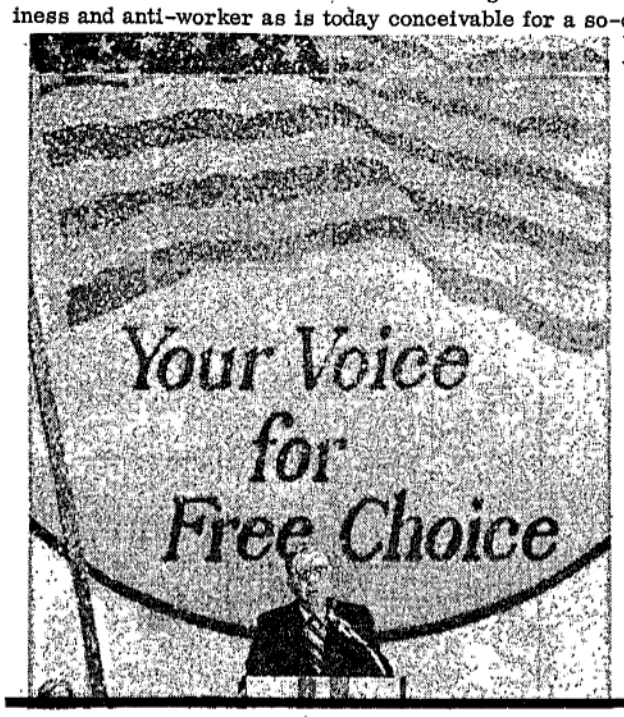
"We as tenants are tired of the dehumanization of us by the inept procedures and actions of the managers and commissions that are in charge. We are fed up with the degrading treatment we receive when we go in to negotiate with the Housing Authorities who seem to try and treat us as children who have no intelligence, because children should be seen and not be heard. But Housing must realize that we are adults, and therefore demand the respect and dignity of adults, because we are going to be seen and also heard."

At the beginning of the strike the Housing Authority sought to divide the strikers by offering some of the leaders special privileges. One woman was offered four different houses, at very low rent. When she refused the last offer she was served an eviction notice. Other strikers are being similarly harrassed, and their cases are now in court.

Besides withholding rents, the women have picketed the office of the manager of the housing project and have deluged the Los Angeles Housing Authority with telephone protests.

FITZ, GROWERS PREPARE JOINT ATTACK ON THE FARMWORKERS

Speaking under the "right to work" union-busting "Freedom of Choice" banner of the American Farm Bureau Federation, Teamsters President Frank L. Fitzsimmons called, on December '2, for an "alliance" between the Teamsters Union and that extreme conservative growers interest group. In a speech which was about as openly pro-business and anti-worker as is today conceivable for a so-called "labor leader," Fitzsimmons blasted the AFL-CIO United Farm Workers Union as "a revolutionary movement which is perpetrating a fraud on the American public."



Fitzsimmons said he would "welcome an alliance with the farmers - whether they be of the family farm variety or agribusiness variety" and went on to call for an "accommodation which will work for the benefit of your organization (the Farm Bureau) and for mine (the Teamsters)."

NOW IT'S OFFICIAL

Fitzsimmons' speech was in effect the kickoff of a joint "organizing campaign" by the Teamsters and the growers against the United Farm Workers Union which was officially announced the next day. As Robert Fleming, secretary-treasurer of the Farm Bureau, said afterwards, "Of course farmers would be more favorable to the Teamsters than to Chavez' unit."

It is essential that the entire labor movement, including rank-and-file Teamsters, join ranks to defend the Farm Workers against this vicious anti-labor attack from within the labor movement itself.

S.P. FOREMAN LOSES COOL AT YARD

An S.P. Worker Reports from Taylor Yard:

Railroad shop workers at Southern Pacific's Taylor Yard continue to laugh over events at the Locomotive Service Track.

Recent reports to PICKET LINE from rank-and-filers are that soon admission will be charged to workers wishing to watch performances in the three-ring circus which shows up periodically at the Service Track.

Relief Machinist Foreman L. Barnett, instigated by the notorious scab, General Foreman Howard Hines, on October 20 staged the latest entertainment. Barnett, who gets confused easily (it is reported that he can't make up his mind whether to stay at Southern Pacific as a foreman or parlay his reserve status into full-time Burbank policeman), tried first, unsuccessfully, to send a rank-and-filer home in violation of the Labor Agreement. Frustrated, he then demanded, again in violation of the Agreement (Rule 53), that workers leaving the property for lunch punch-out at the time clock.

Fed-up with this kid, still wet behind the ears, a dozen workers punched out at 8:00 p.m. and never bothered to come back. In spite of the fact that Barnett, with reinforcements from the Ramp, worked everybody to the 11:00 p.m. whistle, no locomotives moved off the track after lunch.

Shaking like a leaf, Barnett left the Service Track, in the process losing or misplacing his whole crew's time-cards. Apparently giving up, Barnett started an 'emergency' vacation on the twenty-second. Also reported missing is the page from the Locomotive Log Book for Barnett's shift on the twentieth. No locomotives have been reported missing as a result of his screwing up, although that missing page prevents immediate check-up.

What One Market Street (Southern Pacific Headquarters in San Francisco) thinks of this kind of behavior is not known yet. Taylor shop foremen are voicing, however, strong resentment at the manipulating of Barnett by General Foreman Howard Hines, who's already in big trouble for abusing a rank-and-file leader in the yard.

FED JOB GOES TO EX-USW WITCH-HUNTER

An L.A. Steelworker Reports:

An urgent warning from Los Angeles labor rank-and-filers to all fellow workers, especially in Northern California, has been issued as the result of the appointment of one John A. Despol as a Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service Mediator in San Francisco.

Federal mediators are used as 'impartial' concilia tors to help 'resolve' labor disputes.

Despol's record of collaboration with management speaks for itself.

FRIEND OF BOSSES

Despol, as a Steelworkers staff representative since 1940, was responsible for one sell-out after another. After World War II, before he became head of the California State CIO Council, he sold out the workers at O'Keefe & Merritt in Los Angeles, causing them, in self-defense, to decertify the Steelworkers. During the period 1948-1951, Despol headed up the right-wing drive in California which split the CIO, causing the explusion of the eleven so-called 'left' internationals from the CIO. Scores of rank-and-file active trade unionists lost their jobs after being fingered by Despol and his stooges, who cooperated with employers during the 1950's. After he lost his job with the state AFL-CIO, in 1962 Despol was appointed Administrator of Steelworkers 2058 (American Bridge). In order to break the back of the local, he had, in collusion with management, ten active rank-and-filers subpoenaed to the House Un-American Activities Committee and 'testified' against them. Fighting back the rank-and-file exposed Despol before the whole labor movement, preventing the discharge of any of the ten and ending Despol's career as a hatchet-man. In 1965 he surfaced briefly during the Harvey Aluminum strike trying to get die sinkers of IDSC Local 220 to cross the picket line. Women steelworkers of Local 6700 physically expelled him from the union hall.

If you value your union, don't let this Despol anywhere near your negotiations.

Miners for Democracy

Continued from page 1

to decline from its once proud position as America's strongest and most militant union, to a position of desperate weakness vis-a-vis the now strengthened coal corporations.

The current election poses more than the possibility of kicking out Boyle. The MFD has vowed to both democratize the UMW from top to bottom and rekindle the UMW's traditional unbending militance against the coal corporations. The program of the Miners for Democracy is based on three key points:

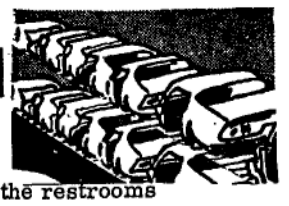
MFD PROGRAM

1)Union Democracy. All Contracts are to be voted on by the rank and file. All local and district officials are to be elected, not appointed. (Miller-Trbovisch-Patrick have stated that they themselves would serve only one term and then relinquish office.)

2)Safety. "Coal will be mined safely, or not at all," states the ten-point MFD safety program. "No miner will be fired for refusing to work in an unsafe mine." "Coal miners are to be paid when a mine is closed because of safety violations." No speedup-- "Full crews on all working sections." "At least one full time safety committeeman on each shift." "Safety will never be arbitrated."

3)Rebuilding UMW power. Pointing toward the 1974 contract (for which it is demanding large wage and pension increases), the MFD slate promises a massive organizing campaign to add to UMW ranks some 44,000 miners who Boyle has failed to organize. It further promises to rebuild the UMW strike fund (which somehow has disappeared during Boyle's 10 years in office).

Workers' Health/Safety Ignored by GM



SOUTHGATE NOISE

A Member of UAW Local 216 Reports:

Something has got to be done about the noise in the body shop. It is really terrible. The only way to talk to a fellow worker is to shout at him.

And it is not only the eight and ten hours we are spending on the line. It affects the rest of our lives also. Recently, we have heard about one worker whose family life was broken up in large part because of the constantly high noise level where he worked. When he went home he was jittery from the plant work, especially the noise. He couldn't relax. He had to have the television loud, had to talk loud, and finally his family broke up.

Recently, they have been testing the hearing of people in the body shop. We don't know if they want to find out whether we can still hear or whether they want to see how much damage has already been done. What we do know is that the body shop is too noisy.

Humanizing working conditions should not be just a slogan of a company executive for the press, it should be right down on the shop floor.

INTERVIEW WITH A VAN NUYS WORKER

Recently, PICKET LINE interviewed Al S.(not his real name) a worker at the GM plant in Van Nuys. Here is what this member of Local 645, UAW, had to say about health and safety conditions in the plant.

PICKET LINE: Al, can you tell us about health conditions at the Van Nuys GM plant?
Al: Yes. We have a big health problem in there. For example in the paint department, the people are breathing that lead-based paint with no eye protection and no mouthpieces to protect them from the stuff.

PL: Why aren't they given glasses to protect their eyes from the paint?
Al: Because they can do the job faster without glasses. If they have glasses on the paint gets on the glasses and they have to keep replacing the glass. At least this is the excuse that was given. See, nothing is issued to you. You have to go and ask for it. For instance, you can work without a respirator and you're breathing all that lead paint all day long. I don't know how long you can last doing that.

PL: Do you think if they brought in an inspector to investigate this would pass the health standards?
Al: Definitely not. There's a lot which wouldn't pass. For instance, the restrooms. They clean them when they have time. See, what they do when people are out is use the janitors on the line and the restrooms can go two or three days without being cleaned.

PL: Suppose someone gets sick at the plant, what happens to him?
Al: It all depends on what's "sick." You may think you're sick having a stomach ache or your leg hurts, or whatever. But the company doesn't consider you sick unless you have over 100 degrees temperature. If you don't have over 100 temperature you're not sick. It's as simple as that.

PL: So there's a big difference between the men's definition and the company's definition of being sick?
Al: Right. If you can possibly work you're perfectly well no matter what's really wrong with you're health, or how bad you feel. For the company, the only definition of being sick is not being able to work.

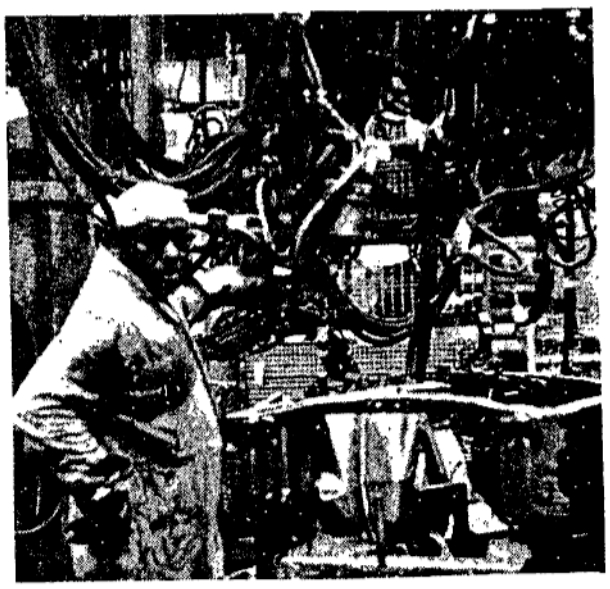
PL: So, if you can produce and make money for the company, you're not sick?
Al: Right. For example, let's say you've been out with a cold and you come back and the doctor maintains that you're not ready to come back to work but the foreman thinks you're ready to go back because he needs the manpower. In that case, you will go back because the foreman overrules the doctor.

PL: Then it's like the situation on the line. The foreman is in control of the health dept. just as he is in control of the line. Does the doctor go along with the foreman?
Al: Yes, 99% of the time he does. Say I have to go to the medical department because I don't feel good. The foreman might call the medical department before I get there and say "So-and-so is coming down and I don't want him to go home." The reason I know this is that when I've gone to the medical department, other foremen have called for other men and what happened was the man came in and was sent right back out again. They give him two aspirins and tell him to go back to work.

INJURIES ON THE LINE

PL: Can you talk a bit about safety conditions on the line?
Al: Well, I can tell you an incident that happened in the motor shakedown--that's where the motor comes down into the chassis on a hoist. The hoist broke and fell on a guy's arm and the engine fell on the line and the general foreman came running over there and started shouting "Move the engine out of the way and keep this line going." They just weren't concerned about the man at all, they only wanted to keep the line going. They just picked the engine up, put it in the car and continued with it. The cable was never fixed and we had to go and write a grievance. They came and changed the cable. But the cable breaks every six or eight months.

PL: Have other people gotten hurt or can they get hurt?
Al: Yes, because when the cable comes down, there are four or five people who work around there. Also, there have been several times when people have gotten hit in the head with the hook which the engine comes on After the hook puts down the engine, they are required to throw it across and people get hit on the head.



PL: What about mental health in the plant and on the line?
Al: This year since the model changeover there have been four guys that just flipped out. A guy named Tommy, he just one day started crying, threw his tools on the ground and said, "What am I doing here?" He just went crazy. Another guy from the materials department had a nervous breakdown, when they sent him to the jungle (body shop). Another guy also flipped out. This man was having a nervous breakdown and they sent him to the nurse's office and the nurse gave him two aspirin and told him to go back to work. This is too much.

GMAD Strategy

Continued from page 1

ship inform thoroughly the entire membership of what the issues are? Does it help develop their sense of solidarity? Does it depend on their support and the support they can muster around them in the community to win the strike?"

UNC agrees that it is important to prepare for the forthcoming contract negotiations, but it asserts that the best way to do this is to build strength in the rank and file. And this can only be done through responding successfully in the present struggle with GMAD.

UNC concluded: "The mini-strike strategy is failing. There is one and only one alternative: All GMAD must be struck. The membership of the UAW in its entirety must be involved in the support of this strike."

Further information on the UNC, as well as the UNC newspaper can be obtained from:
The United National Caucus
P.O. Box 146
Centerline, Michigan 48015

Campus Worker Blasts Job Hazards

At UCLA many non-academic services and activities, such as the cafeteria, snack bars, the bookstore, are run, not by the UCLA administration, but by a separate corporation called Associated Students of UCLA (ASUCLA). The following article was written for Picket Line by a woman who works on the UCLA campus in the cafeteria run by ASUCLA.

FABLE: Once upon a time there was an employee who worked as a server in the cafeteria for the ASUCLA Food Service. She accidentally slipped and fell on a puddle of water on the floor. Now, there are spaces on the floor where there are rubber slip-proof mats and there are places on the floor where there are no mats (most notably in front of the sinks where most spillage takes place). She made the mistake of slipping in one of the spaces where there are no rubber mats, instead of slipping in one of the spaces where there are rubber mats (in which case she wouldn't have slipped at all).

MORAL: If you're going to slip, do it where there are mats, because if you slip where there are no mats, you will probably fall.

QUESTION: WHY DOES ASUCLA PERMIT SPACES ON THE FLOOR (MOST NOTABLY IN FRONT OF THE SINKS) WHERE THERE ARE NO MATS?

FABLE: Once upon a time there was another ASUCLA employee who accidentally burned himself on a grill. He reported the accident and applied for some Solarcaine. No Solarcaine could be found, but someone dug up some Bactine, dribbled some on his finger and sent him back to the grill. Too bad he didn't get a second or third degree burn--then they could have sent him to the UCLA Medical Center to get it taken care of.

MORAL: If you're going to get burned, get really burned badly, so you can get sufficient first-aid at the Medical Center.

QUESTION: WHY DOES ASUCLA NOT PROVIDE ADEQUATE FIRST AID EQUIPMENT IN THE CAFETERIA, WHERE ALL EMPLOYEES KNOW WHERE TO FIND IT IN CASE OF EMERGENCY?

FABLE: A third employee developed a back condition as a result of lifting many heavy trays as part of her job. The condition forced her off the job, and she was paid NOTHING by ASUCLA in compensation. If she had not developed a back condition she would still be engaged in gainful (at $2.17 per hour???) employment.

MORAL: Don't develop a back condition, because it may cause you financial hardship.

QUESTION: WHY DID ASUCLA ALLOW THIS EMPLOYEE TO WORK UNDER CONDITIONS DETRIMENTAL TO HER HEALTH; AND WHY WAS SHE NOT COMPENSATED BY ASUCLA FOR HER INJURY?

OBNOXIOUS SUPERVISION

The above describes what type of conditions we ASUCLA Food Services workers live under every working day. In addition, we deal with supervision that insures as soon as we learn to do one job quickly, we are given another to do at the same time. That supervision is often out and out obnoxious. We are treated like unequals, too stupid to remember the amount of macaroni to serve a customer from one day to the next.

Some of us have to raise children on $2.17 an hour and students, earning a little less, have difficulty keeping up with the rising costs of tuition and books. Students are paid no benefits; not even the meager benefits afforded full-time employees. Moreover, they can be "not re-hired" at the end of an academic quarter for no specific reason.

There are now more student employees in Food Services than full-time employees. ASUCLA thinks that because student-workers are only temporary workers, they won't be interested in organizing with other workers for our common defense. But, I don't think ASUCLA should bet on that. Their "fables" affect us equally, and we recognize that both student-workers and full-time workers are in this together. We've got some fables of our own, you know--like, how the "stupid" turtle beat the crafty hare, for one...